



Town of Natick **Summer 2017 Newsletter**

*Issued by Martha L. White,
Town Administrator*

Natick Board of Selectmen

Jonathan Freedman, Chair
Sue Salamoff, Vice Chair
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Amy Mistrot
Michael Hickey

Town of Natick, Massachusetts

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Town Election

Following the Town election last March, the Board of Selectmen welcomed new members Amy Mistrot and Michael Hickey. Both new members have extensive experience in service to the community, Ms. Mistrot having served on the School Committee for several years and Mr. Hickey having been a long-time member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Amy and Mike share the current members' interest in and commitment to enhancing the Board's leadership role in the community. The Administration looks forward to working with the Board in this regard as well as the fulfillment of its responsibilities and goals.

Natick DPW Earns Prestigious National Awards

At a recent event held by the American Public Works Association/New England Chapter, it was announced that Tom Hladick, Highway & Sanitation Division Supervisor, and the Natick Department of Public Works are being recognized for two national awards. The awards will be officially received at the National APWA Congress this August.

Tom Hladick is being honored with the national award for Professional Manager of the Year for Solid Waste Management. This award recognizes exceptional leadership and management in the field of solid waste and recycling.

In addition, APWA's national award for Exceptional Performance in Sustainability is being awarded to the Town of Natick Department of Public Works. This award recognizes organizations that have made outstanding contributions to promote sustainability in the field of public works. This award demonstrates the Department's (and the Town's) achievements to deliver efficient services, maintain its fleet and infrastructure, and build infrastructure improvements in an

environmentally and socially responsible way that ensures the best choices for the long term.

Congratulations to Tom and everyone at the DPW for these great accomplishments!

Expanded Recycling Opportunities

We continue to seek creative opportunities to reduce costs associated with disposal of municipal solid waste. Our latest initiative involves a regional curbside collection program focused on textiles and other household items. These items represent nearly 6% of the solid waste stream, though an estimated 95% can be reused or recycled. In partnership with WasteZero and Simple Recycling, textiles and household items will be collected curbside on residents' recycling days (every other week) using bright pink recycling bags provided by WasteZero free of charge to all residents. In addition, Simple Recycling will pay the Town \$20 per ton of material collected.

Eligible items include draperies, bedding, pots & pans, small lamps, toys, tools and much more; the full list and program instructions can be found on the DPW/Highway and Sanitation webpage - look for the "pink bag" program - or by calling 647-6550.

Natick Center Station Accessibility Improvements

The Town is working with the MBTA and a consulting team to develop a design for improvements to the Natick Center Commuter Rail Station. At present, this heavily used station is fully inaccessible, and various site constraints present substantial design challenges. The comprehensive design - expected to take about 18 months - is part of the MBTA/MassDOT 5-year Capital Investment Plan at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million in state funding. Construction funding is subject to the MBTA's final design approval.

Status of Major Building Projects

Kennedy Middle School

The Kennedy Middle School project is being advanced by the Kennedy Middle School Building Committee, under the authority of the School Committee. Pursuant to a Statement of Interest that the Town submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in March 2015, the MSBA invited the Town to prepare a Feasibility Study for the project. While this invitation does not guarantee future MSBA financial assistance for building construction, our continued adherence to and fulfillment of MSBA requirements should lead us to this objective.

The Feasibility Study, scheduled for completion late this summer, will - among other things - evaluate the options of renovating the existing building vs. new construction, and provide justification for the resulting recommendation. Subject to the MSBA's authorization, the project will then proceed to the Schematic Design phase.

Very preliminary estimates suggest project costs ranging from \$97,000,000 for the addition/ renovation option to \$100,000,000 for new school construction. Subject to MSBA project approval, development of a new Kennedy Middle School would qualify for 40% or greater state funding reimbursement.

Funding for this project will inevitably necessitate a debt exclusion - a temporary increase in the amount the community can levy (i.e. impose property taxes above the limitations of Proposition 2 1/2) - in order to cover the annual debt payments for the subject project.

Proposals for funding through debt exclusion must be presented to voters in the form of a ballot question; such questions can be presented to voters only by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Selectmen (i.e., with a 5-member Board, 4 members must vote favorably). We expect that, if authorized by the Board of Selectmen, a debt exclusion question will be on the ballot for the March 2018 Town Election. If favorably voted, a request for borrowing authorization at the 2018 Spring Annual Town Meeting would follow.

West Natick (Speen Street) Fire Station

The West Natick Fire Station Building Committee and their design team have developed an initial Program, Space Analysis and Conceptual Design; several variations on the conceptual design will be developed

and evaluated before advancing design development. This project is moving forward generally on the same schedule as the Kennedy Middle School. Very preliminary project estimates are in the range of \$10 million.

The Administration has expressed its goal of, and outlined a plan for, funding the Fire Station without need for debt exclusion, although achieving this funding plan will be very challenging and is far from certain. Specifically, this plan requires that additional funds must be appropriated to the Capital Stabilization Fund at every opportunity and to the greatest extent possible; if adequate, these reserves would allow the Town to accommodate the additional debt payments associated with the Fire Station within the operating budget.

Again, it will be very challenging to fund the West Natick Fire Station without the additional financial resources that a debt exclusion would provide. The Town faces substantial short and long-term capital needs, as well as considerable challenges within the operating budget to meet current and anticipated recurring expenses.

2017 Boston Marathon

As a "host community" to the Boston Marathon, the Boston Athletic Association (BAA) issues to the Town of Natick several invitational entries. Through the Town Administrator's Office, Natick area non-profits are selected through a competitive process who, in turn, issue the invitational entries to runners who commit to raising a minimum of \$4,000. Through this program, over \$117,000 was raised for 11 local charities/non-profit organizations.

Route 27 Project Update

Over the past couple of months, the Mass. Highway Department (MassDOT) has held public hearings regarding both the Route 27 improvement project, and the separate Route 27/Route 9 intersection and bridge project. Both projects are at the 25% design stage. The Route 27 project design is being managed by the Town while the Route 27/Route 9 project is managed by MassDOT.

Wishing a safe and fun Summer to all!

